

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AGRE-00 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 AF-10 ARA-10
EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 COME-00 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OIC-02
SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
/117 W

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R 291401Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6195

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 12367

FODAG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UN, WFC
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE CANDIDACY FOR POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL.

1. AT LAST A HAT IS IN THE RING FOR THE TOP SECRETARIAT
POST IN THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL -- HOSE DANIEL FALDINI,
ARGENTINE ALTERNATE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE (IN PRACTICE
ACTING AS THE REPRESENTATIVE) TO FAO. ALL OTHER TOP POSTS
IN THE ROME AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE LONG BEEN
ANNOUNCED FOR, OR DECIDED UPON, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST CANDI-
DACY WE HAVE HEARD OF TO REPLACE DR. JOHN HANNAH, WHO IS
EXPECTED TO RETIRE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD FOOD
COUNCIL IN LATE AUTUMN 1977.

2. WORD OF FALDINI'S CANDIDACY CAME TO US THROUGH THE
OFFICE OF OUR ITALIAN COLLEAGUE, WHO SO FAR AS WE KNOW IS
THE ONLY DEVELOPED COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE TO HAVE BEEN
APPROACHED. FALDINI TOLD THE ITALIANS THAT HE
HAS THE SUPPORT OF FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA, AND THAT HE
IS SEEKING GROUP-77 SUPPORT. THE ITALIANS SAY THEY WERE
NON-COMMITTAL.

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3. ONE SENSITIVE QUESTION ABOUT THIS APPOINTMENT IS WHO
ARE TO MAKE THE DECISION. SINCE THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL
IS A UN ORGAN, AND NOT A SPECIALIZED AGENCY, THE APPOINT-
MENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS MADE BY THE UN SECRE-
TARY-GENERAL. FORMER FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL BOERMA WAS
FULLY CONSULTED IN THE FIRST APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER, TO THE

POINT OF HAVING ALMOST AN EQUAL SAY. BUT A CHANGE WAS MADE SUBSEQUENTLY WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TWO-YEAR TENURE AND SOME INTERIM RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, WHO IN 1975 WAS ELECTED MONTHS AFTER THE APPOINTMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. GROUP-77 INSISTED UPON BUILDING UP A ROLE FOR SAYED MAREI OF EGYPT, BUT HE DID NOT FULFILL IT. PHILIPPINE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TANCO, ELECTED PRESIDENT IN JUNE 1977, IS EXPECTED TO PLAY A MUCH MORE ACTIVE ROLE, ALTHOUGH OPERATING MAINLY FROM MANILA. TANCO WILL SURELY EXPECT TO HAVE A STRONG VOICE IN THE SLECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

4. A SECOND SENSITIVITY IS THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE APPOINTMENT. DR. JOHN HANNAH OF THE UNITED STATES WAS APPOINTED IN 1975 AS A LAST-MINUTE COMPROMISE WHEN BOERMA AND WALDHEIM FOUND THEIR RESPECTIVE PAKISTANI AND CANADIAN CANDIDATES UNACCEPTABLE TO ONE ANOTHER. DR. HANNAH'S APPOINTMENT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE OTHER NEW TOP POST CREATED BY THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, THE HEAD OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP FOR FOOD PRODUCTION AND INVESTMENT, WOULD BE AMBASSADOR EDWIN M. MARTIN OF THE UNITED STATES. GROUP-77 WAS ANTAGONIZED BY THIS U.S. PREDOMINANCE, AND THIS CREATED DIFFICULTIES FOR THE UNITED STATES, FOR DR. HANNAH, AND FOR THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL. EVEN THE OTHER DEVELOPED

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COUNTRIES HAVE SHOWN SOME HOSTILITY TOWARD US BECAUSE THIS SITUATION ALSO INJURED THEM. FOR THESE REASONS, IT WOULD SEEM ADVISABLE FOR THE UNITED STATES NOT TO TAKE ANY LEADING ROLE IN CONSULTATIONS ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT. SINCE TANCO IS FROM A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT A DEVELOPED COUNTRY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WOULD BE IN ORDER. BUT TANCO IS NOT FROM THE EXTREME WING OF THE GROUP-77 COUNTRIES, AND PERHAPS WOULD NOT NEED COUNTERBALANCING. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE WISE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO LET OTHERS TAKE THE LEAD IN ARGUING OUT VIEWS ON THE APPOINTMENT AS TO WHETHER HE SHOULD BE FROM A DEVELOPING OR DEVELOPED COUNTRY, AND WHETHER HE WOULD BE GNERALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL.

5. AS TO FALDINI'S CAPABILITIES, HE IS WELL KNOWN TO MANY U.S. OFFICIALS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN CONFERENCES WITH HIM HERE. TO US, HE APPEARS FRIENDLY AND ITELLIGENT, AND HE HAS A GOOD BACKGROUND IN AGRICULTURE. WE HAVE NO BASIS FOR JUDGING HIS COMPETENCE AS AN EXECUTIVE. FROM THE U.S. POLICY VIEWPOINT, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT HE AND HIS COUNTRY

HAVE DIFFERED WITH US ON THE IMPORTANT RELEVANT
ISSUES OF FOOD TRADE AND DEGREE OF PRIORITY OF
ASSISTANCE TO THE POOREST COUNTRIES. POSSIBLY THE
BLACKEST MARK AGAINST HIM IS THAT HE IS A MEMBER
OF THE CORPS OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO FAO,
WHICH HAS GIVEN GREAT POLITICAL DIFFICULTY IN
WORLD FOOD COUNCIL OPERATIONS. THE SUCCESS OF THE

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6196

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 12367

FODAG

THIRD MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE,
IN JUNE 1977, WAS IN FACT ATTRIBUTED IN LARGE PART TO
THE FACT THAT IT WAS HELD IN MANILA AND THAT PRACTICALLY
NONE OF THE FAO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM ROME
ATTENDED IT. TANCO IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THIS
POINT, AND PROBABLY WOULD TEND TO OPPOSE FALDINI'S
APPOINTMENT ON THAT GROUND. WE DO NOT INTEND TO SOUND
DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA OUT, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY,
FOR THIS REASON, AND FOR REASONS GIVEN IN PARA 4.

6. THE TENTATIVE AND RISKY GUESS OF THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
TO FAO IS THAT FALDINI DOES NOT HAVE STRONG
ENOUGH SUPPORT, AND HAS A NUMBER OF WEAK POINTS, AND
THAT HIS CANDIDACY PROBABLY WILL FALL BY THE WAYSIDE.

7. WE SUGGEST THAT WE BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO
ARGENTINE OVERTURES, ON THE BASIS OF PARA 4 ABOVE, TO
THE EFFECT THAT THE PRESENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS AN
AMERICAN, AND THAT HIS APPOINTMENT SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH
THAT OF AMBASSADOR MARTIN, PROVED EMBARRASSING FOR US,

AND THAT FOR THESE REASONS WE PREFER NOT TO PLAY ANY
ACTIVE ROLE IN CONSULTATIONS ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT OF
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DR. HANNAH'S SUCCESSOR.GARDNER

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